

REMARK

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application in light of the below remarks. Claims 7, 13, and 14 have been amended. No claims have been cancelled or added by this amendment. Therefore, claims 1-21 are present for examination.

35 U.S.C. §103 Rejection

Epinions.com in view of Scharber et al.

Claims 1-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Epinions.com in view of Scharber et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,374,290).

Epinions.com discloses a user ratings system using a web of trust concept for a variety of goods and services. In Epinions.com, a given user may establish a web of trust by adding users to the user's "web". Thus, for a given service or good, a first member may see reviews of that service or product from members that the first member trusts.

Scharber discloses an information exchange community, whereby clients may download information from a server. Users on clients may specify user preferences and profiles for viewing information (virtual servers). Additionally, users on clients may become members of virtual communities. A virtual community contains categories of information specific to the preferences for that

community. For example, a virtual community allows server administrators an opportunity to provide valuable content to users while enabling undesired material to be excluded based on a community and client profiles rather than the standards imposed by a server administrator. (See column 3, lines 57-62.)

Scharber additionally allows clients of virtual communities to assign ratings to articles that are distributed in a virtual community (for example, see column 4, lines 3-5) so that articles and sets of articles may be linked to a virtual community, or be removed from the virtual community based on standards set for the community (see column 4, lines 7-16). Additionally, users may select particularly rated discussions based on their own client profiles (see column 4, lines 55-59).

For at least the reasons discussed below, the Applicants disagree that Epinions and Scharber make obvious the Applicants' invention as recited by the claims.

First, Epinions.com does not teach or suggest maintaining a rating for each of the users in an electronic community. Epinions.com merely discloses a system in which a user can add other users to his/her web of trust. Epinions.com does not disclose a system in which other users added to a given user's web of trust are given a rating. As such, Epinions.com lacks, at the least, the element of "maintaining a characteristic value for each of the plurality of users, each characteristic value representing a rating for a given user".

Secondly, Scharber does not teach or suggest "deriving a community rating for a particular user by performing a function on the characteristic values of the users of the plurality of users related to the particular user". Scharber does not teach a relationship between users, and furthermore does not teach performing a function on a rating to derive a community rating. In Scharber, while a rating is assigned to articles within a virtual community, a rating is not assigned to a particular user of a virtual community.

Further, Scharber certainly does not disclose obtaining that community rating by performing a function on the characteristic values (i.e., ratings) of the users related to the particular user. There is no teaching or discussion of performing any kind of a function on the ratings. The ratings are just assigned by the users.

Thirdly, Scharber is non-analogous art. While Epinions.com discloses a "web of trust" concept for determining whether to trust the opinions of users, Scharber discloses a ratings system for determining how to filter information.

Fourthly, Epinions.com and Scharber each lack the motivation to be combined with one another. As stated above, Epinions.com discloses a system for determining trust, and Scharber discloses a system for filtering information.

- At the time of the invention, it would not have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the teachings of Scharber with the teachings of Epinions.com for the simple reason that the teachings are unrelated.

Fifthly, even if Epinions.com and Scharber were properly combinable, the combination of the two does not produce the Applicants' invention as recited by the claims. At best, Epinions.com and Scharber teach a web of trust in which some aspect of the web of trust can be rated. Furthermore, the element of determining a rating by performing a function on ratings of others users is still missing from both of the references.

For at least these reasons, the Applicants' believe that the invention as recited by the claims is not made obvious by the combination of Epinions.com and Scharber. It is therefore, respectfully requested that the Examiner's rejections be withdrawn, and the claims be allowed as they stand.

Conclusion

Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections have been overcome by the Amendment and Remark, and that the claims are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the rejections be withdrawn and the claims be allowed.



Invitation for a Telephone Interview

The Examiner is requested to call the undersigned at (303) 740-1980 if there remains any issue with allowance of the case.

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Request for an Extension of Time

The Applicants respectfully petition for an extension of time to respond to the outstanding Office Action pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) should one be necessary. Please charge our Deposit Account No. 02-2666 to cover the necessary fee under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17 for such an extension.

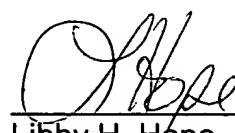
Charge our Deposit Account

Please charge any shortage to our Deposit Account No. 02-2666.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: February 20, 2003



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